

CREATING A RELATIONSHIP MAP

A relationship map provides a blueprint for justice—it reveals the conditions and relationships that are necessary to build a just situation.

The following are steps to follow when creating a relationship map. To aid in understanding the steps, we will use as a sample issue eating healthy food as a requirement for justice.

1. Draw a triangle on a large piece of paper and write a question within it that has this kind of formula: “What factors are necessary to ensure . . .” So, using our sample issue, the question to write in the triangle is, “What factors are necessary to ensure that I eat healthy food today?”
2. Draw several lines out from the triangle like rays from the sun. At the end of each line, make a square. (Give yourself some room so you can expand your map in many directions.) In each square, write a statement that answers the question in the triangle—these should be factors that ensure that justice will occur in this situation. In our sample, the squares might contain statements such as: “I choose to eat healthy food “ and “Healthy food is available at the store.” Note that the answers to this question are written in the four boxes extending out from the triangle on handout 3–B.
3. From each square, draw more lines and place circles at the end of each line. Mentally rephrase the statements in each square into questions that sound like the question in the first step: “What factors are necessary to ensure . . . ?” In our sample, the question becomes, “What factors are necessary to ensure that stores have healthy food available?”
4. In each circle, write a statement that answers the “question” in the square that it surrounds. The circles surrounding the square about healthy food being available at the store might contain these kinds of statements:
 - Healthy food is grown by farmers.
 - Customers want to buy healthy food.
 - Transportation is available to bring the food to the store.
5. Continue expanding the map, using a variety of shapes and rephrasing statements into questions until you have fleshed out the map as assigned or to your satisfaction. As you will see, a relationship map is very complex, and it reveals that a single justice issue touches many other justice issues.
6. To explore these relationships in greater depth, identify the extent to which an individual experience of justice or injustice lies within the control of the individual person who is having the experience. Put an asterisk next to the

shapes that contain answers that are completely within the control of the individual.

On our sample map, only one statement, “I choose to eat healthy food,” is in the control of the individual person. All the other factors that go into eating healthy food are related to other people and structures in society. Because every issue of injustice and justice is related to many other issues, a relationship map helps us identify which structures and people build relationships or block relationships.

7. Write a reflection about your relationship map, answering these questions:
 - What are the *most important* factors necessary to ensure . . . (in the sample, that I eat healthy food?)
 - How do institutions or social structures promote or block this reality of justice? (Where is the power located and how is it used?)
 - What individual choices contribute to the reality of justice or injustice? (How much power does an individual have to experience justice here?)
 - Where could I put myself in this relationship map? (Where this justice is concerned, how could I help build life-giving relationships for myself or others?)